Letters

So You Think It Can't Happen to You

Mech, Fall 2001

That story reminded me of my own NC-10 mishap. I had been tasked with more things than I could handle, but, like many other Sailors, I didn't want to admit I couldn't take care of everything.

I was a qualified plane captain, working in the corrosion-control shop. The line division was undermanned, and I was tasked to help them move an airplane. The tow tractor I wanted to use couldn't fit through a small opening, so I decided not to risk it, ran to the other side of the aircraft, and jumped on a different tractor.

I glanced around and noticed an NC-10 was behind the tractor, but I started the tug anyway because I thought I had seen the ATs disconnect the power unit. I was wrong!

When I drove the tractor forward, the NC-10 followed, pulling the power plug from a Hawkeye and producing a spark from the power receptacle. It cost me my SE licenses and quals, but I learned a big lesson. In the future, I'll engage brain before accelerator.

AM3 William Coxe
VAW-124

Editorial: Break the Trend

Mech, Winter 2001/2002

The photograph on page 2 is an H-53–aircraft side number 19–from HMH-362. The caption incorrectly states a Marine died under the helicopter. It also says the mishap occurred as a result of working on the landing gear without a jack. A Marine was under this helicopter, but he is alive. An overserviced nose landing-gear strut caused the mishap.

SSgt. Chris Anderson,
MAG-24, 1st MAW

Ouch! An editor's worst mistake. Thank you for setting the record straight. I wrote about a different Marine who died under an H-53 with a collapsed main-landing gear but chose one photo from a group of shots I thought were related. My point still is valid. When working on landing gear, it is much safer to use a jack to prevent the possibility of injury or death. I also want to thank GySgt. Frank Kline and SSgt. Brian Scott for pointing out my mistake.—Ed.

Bristle Disks Make Spot-Corrosion Work Easier and Better

Mech, Fall 2001

I noticed a Marine on page 16 not wearing the proper PPE while operating a wire-whip disc. He isn't wearing a heavy set of gloves on his hands or a full-face shield to protect his face from wire that occasionally fly off those disks.

Before joining the Navy, I saw a wheel throw three to five wires toward a worker. Two of the wires went into his hand, and one shattered after hitting his goggles. The fragments peppered his face—it looked like he tried to shave while driving on a bumpy road.

That employer made everyone wear a full-face shield when using a disc grinder. The worker lost 5 days because of the incident. I don't want to see the same thing happen to an unsuspecting maintainer.

AT2(AW) Charles Berlemann
USS *Enterprise* (CVN 65) AIMD

The disk being used is a new plastic product. The point of the story is the effort to replace wire flap brushes and abrasive wheels—in part, to prevent some of the problems you mentioned. I've included a response from an airframes maintenance analyst.—Ed.

Analyst's comment: Despite the bristle disk's new material, Petty Officer Berlemann brought a valid concern to light. Current manuals do not cover this specific disk, but some common sense rules do apply. The *Aircraft Weapons System Cleaning and Corrosion Control manual* (NAVAIR 01-1A-509) addresses PPE to be used with power tools. The pneumatic grinder uses an air source for power, and I think that defines it as a power tool. The disk can be used to remove corrosion or paint, therefore it requires PPE depending on the category of use—respirator, gloves, goggles, or face shield could be necessary. With any new product that has not been incorporated in MIMs, it is a good rule of thumb to contact the manufacturer to see what equipment they deem necessary when using their product.–Senior Chief Steve Novak is a maintenance analyst at the Naval Safety Center.